

ACVETEO - ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT,
TRAINING AND EMPLOYER OUTREACH

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
MAY 30, 2018

SUMMARY MINUTES

THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON
VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING, AND
EMPLOYER OUTREACH (ACVETEO)

U.S. Department of Labor
Frances Perkins Building
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Washington, D.C. 20210

PARTICIPANTS:

CHAIRPERSON RYAN GALLUCCI, Deputy Director, National Veterans
Service for the Veterans of Foreign Wars

LORI ADAMS, ACVETEO

LOIS A. BETHARDS, Executive Director, American Indian Center of
Arkansas

ANDREW BLANK, Bureau of Labor Statistics

CHRIS BUTTON, Department of Labor

MIKA CROSS, Department of Labor VETS

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ANNE HIRSH, Co-Director, Job Accommodation Network

JON JUKURI, National Conference of State Legislatures

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TIM WINTER, Transition Assistance Program Lead

IN THE PUBLIC:

TIM LOWE, Veterans of Foreign Wars

WILLIAM OFFUTT, Victory Media

LISA ROSSER, CEO and Founder, The Value of a Veteran

MICHAEL STODDARD, ACVETEO

ROBERT SHEPARD, Department of Labor

WELCOME AND REMARKS

Ms. Mika Cross, Designated Federal Officer, welcomed the attendees present, and presented **Mr. Matt Miller**, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans Employment and Training, Department of Labor VETS, to make opening remarks.

Mr. Miller presented **Chairman Ryan Gallucci** a certificate of appreciation in recognition of his special contributions to the Advisory Committee on Veterans' Employment, Training, and Employer Outreach since the May 30, 2018 meeting would be **Chairman Gallucci's** last meeting.

ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

Ms. Cross recognized **Mr. Greg Green**, ACVETEO, for his contributions to the Committee by taking care of the logistics, travel and parking accommodations for the participants as well as recognizing the new Chief of Staff, **Mr. Jonathan Vanderplas**, to the Committee. She also presented the summary notes from the last meeting, which the Committee approved. **Chairman Ryan Gallucci** reviewed administrative business, primarily the schedule for the day, as well as thanking the Committee for the privilege of being able to serve with the Committee before stepping down as chairman.

BLS BRIEF ON THE 2017 EMPLOYMENT SITUATION OF VETERANS FROM ANDREW BLANK, BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

Mr. Andrew Blank, Bureau of Labor Statistics, briefed the Committee on veteran data that was compiled throughout 2017. He

explained that the data presented is collected on a monthly basis through a voluntary survey of 60,000 households with a 90% response rate; allowing for responses from 8,000-9,000 veterans per month.

Mr. Blank explained that this survey provides ideal data for exploring possible data points relevant to veterans. He explained that the definition of veterans in this data includes those who have served active duty and now are civilians, and that members of the Reserve and National Guard are counted as veterans if they've ever been called to active duty by presidential order. He also discussed the importance of clearly defining categories of comparison to effectively use that data.

Mr. Blank showed that 20.4 million men and women were considered veterans in 2017, accounting for 8% of the general population. 39% of these veterans make up the largest group having served in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. The next largest share is veterans from other service periods. All of those veterans are now all over the age of 45. Gulf War-era I veterans account for about 16% of the veteran population while 20% of the veteran population come from Gulf War-era II veterans.

Mr. Blank also demonstrated the veteran population across age gaps. About half of all veterans are above the age of 65, while about 75% of Gulf War-era II veterans are under the age of 45.

Gulf War II veterans and non-veterans have different gender compositions. In 2017, **Mr. Blank** highlighted that 10% of all veterans are women, compared with about 56% of non-veterans. Also 17% of all Gulf War-era II veterans were women. This is compared with about 4% from World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam Era.

Mr. Blank indicated that out of the 370,000 unemployed veterans, more than half of unemployed veterans are over age 45, and highlighted the importance of approaching veteran unemployment with a multi-generational focus.

In 2017, searches of unemployment rates for male veterans and male non-veterans indicated by age, 25- to 34-year-old veterans had a higher unemployment rate than their non-veterans' counterpart. Women veterans also have a higher unemployment rate for 25- to 35-year-olds.

About 10% of veterans are enrolled in school between the ages of 18 and 24. That's compared with about 7% of non-veterans. Also, veterans the 25-54 year age range are more likely to be enrolled in school than their non-veteran counterparts, but this does not fully explain the higher rates of unemployment.

Ms. Adele Galiardi, ACVETEO, inquired if the large unemployment rates amongst veterans meant that they were actively looking for work or not. **Mr. Blank** reassured her that veterans are indeed actively looking for work.

Mr. Blank moved on to discuss historical data trends. The Great Recession occurred in December 2007 and ended in June 2008. This resulted in a spike in unemployment for Gulf War II veterans, until it peaked in 2011. In 2017, the unemployment rate for veterans was 3.7%, which declined from 4.3% in 2016. Veterans had a statistically lower unemployment rate than non-veterans.

Mr. Blank indicated that about 18% of Gulf War-era II veterans experienced long-term unemployment of 27 weeks or longer, which is less than their non-veteran counterparts. Roughly half of this population consists of veterans between the ages of 25- and 34-years old

Mr. Blank continued his presentation by showing that labor force participation is down for all groups: Gulf War-era II veterans, non-veterans and veterans in general. However, with that being said, labor force participation has not returned to pre-recession levels. Nearly half of all veterans are over the age of 65 and older workers tend not to participate in the work force. He indicated that about 80% of Gulf War-era II veterans are participating in the labor force.

Chairman Gallucci and **Mr. Blank** discussed the breakdown of labor force rates among all age groups of veterans versus non-veterans. **Mr. Blank** reassured the **Chairman** that across each age group, veterans on average participate slightly higher in the labor force than non-veterans in the same age groups. **Ms. Chris**

Button, Department of Labor, inquired if veterans with disabilities who had faced hardships looking for work and had given up looking for work would still be included in unemployment numbers. **Mr. Blank** if this group of veterans is not actively looking for work those numbers would not be factored into the unemployment figures but he did have information regarding service-connected disability to present to the Committee.

Ms. Lisa Rosser, CEO and Founder, The Value of a Veteran, and Mr. Blank had a discussion on the breakdown of the data in terms of full-time work, part-time work, or whether veterans have worked in the last two weeks. **Mr. Ariel DeJesus**, ACVETEO, also asked whether the data also includes our veterans in the U.S. territories: Puerto Rico, Guam and the Virgin Islands.

Mr. Blank moved on to present employment breakdown by industry. Approximately 10% of all veterans work for the federal government, compared to about 2% of non-veterans, and about 15% of all Gulf War-era II veterans work for the federal government. At the state and local level, Gulf War-era II veterans are about twice as likely to work in the public sector as non-veterans.

Male Gulf War II veterans are much more likely to work in protective services, and much less likely to work in sales and office occupations, than male non-veterans. Conversely, female

veterans are more likely to work in management and professional occupations than non-veterans or male veterans.

Mr. Blank presented data for state veteran unemployment rates, and explained the importance of looking at population levels along with rates to understand the employment situation in each state.

Mr. Blank moved on to show the veteran supplement data. The supplement found that 41% of Gulf War II veterans have a rated service-connected disability. Veterans with service-related disabilities are less likely to be in the labor force, but once in the labor market to not appear to have higher rates of unemployment.

The data available on members of the Reserve or Guard is only for those who have served on active duty, but shows that they are more likely to be in the labor force.

Mr. Blank showed that the location of active duty service has very little impact on unemployment or participation in the labor market, and discouraged conflating location of service with conflict period.

Mr. Blank invited questions from the Committee. **Mr. Darrell L. Roberts**, Executive Director, Helmets to Hardhats, asked **Mr. Roberts** if he is going to update the maps used in his state veteran unemployment rates section. **Mr. Blank** confirmed that he is going to make his maps more detailed, especially between Gulf War-era II veterans and non-veterans. **Chairman**

Gallucci and **Mr. Blank** discussed the breakdown of the trends in the data among members of the Reserve and National Guard.

Mr. William Offutt, Victory Media, **Mr. Blank** and **Chairman Gallucci** discussed further in depth on the Bureau of Labor Statistics' (BLS) methods for collecting data on veterans, such as whether the BLS includes repeat households in their data and whether the interviews are conducted in person, over landlines, or over cell phones.

MORE ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

Ms. Cross took a moment to address some additional administrative business before moving on to the next presenter. She advised the participants to go around the room and identify themselves for any new members to the Committee. **Chairman Gallucci** broke down the schedule into more depth for the new members so that they can familiarize themselves on what to expect for the remainder of the meeting.

PRESENTATION FROM ANNE HIRSH, JOB ACCOMMODATION NETWORK (JAN)

Ms. Cross called the meeting back to order and introduced **Ms. Anne Hirsh**, Co-Director, Job Accommodation Network.

Ms. Hirsh gave an overview of the history of the Job Accommodation Network (JAN) and some of the services that it provides for veterans. For example, JAN provides one-on-one consultations regarding job accommodations options in the workplace; provides one-on-one consultations informing employees

about their rights through the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other laws.

Ms. Hirsh further explained that JAN conducts its own research regarding accommodation options in the workforce over seven different categories and provided an example for each category.

First, **Ms. Hirsh** explained how purchasing or modifying equipment for employees can be beneficial. For example, JAN had provided a veteran with a bicycle mirror was attached to their computer so the veteran could see what activity is going on behind them, which helped alleviate some of their anxiety.

Second, **Ms. Hirsh** highlighted the importance of making the worksite more accessible. JAN worked with another veteran with PTSD who was working for a state government on a team project. The employer moved the team office to the basement of the building, and the noises in the basement triggered the veteran's PTSD. When possible, some of the meetings were relocated to a first floor conference room to accommodate for the veteran. Other times, when the first floor conference room was unavailable, this individual could join the team remotely.

Ms. Hirsh moved on to talk about modifying work schedules to better accommodate veterans' needs. She recounted a story of a veteran who had both bipolar and PTSD. This veteran was going through a medicine change and needed approximately half a day every once in a while. However, after the individual discussed

their situation with the employer, the employee was accommodated with an unpaid intermittent leave schedule under the ADA.

The ADA also requires employees to consider and look at modifying workplace policies as an accommodation. JAN worked with a veteran who had lost their vision while in the service and needed service animal for day to day activities. The individual and the employer discussed accommodation options; the employer modified the no dog policy and allowed the individual to bring the service animal.

Another type of accommodation is providing readers, interpreters, and coaches to help enable an individual to be successful. JAN worked with a veteran with had PTSD, a traumatic brain injury, and fatigue. The employer placed the veteran in a cubicle by the exit to help alleviate some of their anxiety. However the employee still had difficulty with memory and organization. A job coach was hired to help develop note-taking forms and provided training for organizational skills.

Ms. Hirsh stressed that reassignment to a vacant position, especially if someone's already employed, is viewed as a last resort accommodation. JAN worked with a veteran with PTSD who had gotten their dream job as a nurse in a hospital. However, the veteran's PTSD symptoms were triggered by helicopters flying to the hospital to drop off and pick up patients. JAN discussed the veteran's rights through ADA and reassignment opportunities. The veteran discussed these options with their employer and was

reassigned to a vacant position on a unit that was far from the helipad.

Ms. Hirsh concluded her discussion with accommodation options for veterans who are self-employed. JAN worked with a veteran who had been a heavy equipment mechanic; however, one of their arms was amputated during military service and could not work on heavy equipment effectively. The veteran wanted to become self-employed, specializing in small equipment repair and had developed the use of a multi-lift overhead hoist to hold the equipment while they made repairs.

Ms. Hirsh opened the floor for questions. She responded to clarifying questions from **Mr. Roberts** about the best means for veterans to get in contact with JAN and if JAN would be open to attending conferences to give more presentations about their services.

Ms. Hirsh also responded to clarifying questions from **Chairman Gallucci** about how employers find out about JAN services. **Ms. Button** asked if information about JAN can be incorporated into the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) so that veterans can be educated about what resources are available to them during and after their transition into civilian life.

Ms. Jennifer Sheehy, Department of Labor, ODEP, asked **Ms. Hirsh** to elaborate on how JAN consultants let veterans know what their local resources might be or where to look for them.

Ms. Hirsh also responded to clarifying questions from **Mr. Timothy Green**, ACVETEO, about the average cost to the employer for providing an accommodation when hiring a disabled employee. In a September 2017 report, 59% the time employers have reported that accommodations cost absolutely nothing.

Ms. Cross asked if JAN could extend resources to employers on how to restructure positions at physical job sites as a telework options and to see if those restructured positions could also be extended to military spouses or spouses who act as caregivers.

The Committee took a brief recess.

DEMONSTRATION OF THE NEW CAREER TECHNICAL TRACK WITH
PARTICIPANT GUIDE FROM TIM WINTER, TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
LEAD

Ms. Cross called the meeting back to order and introduced **Mr. Ivan Denton**, Director of National Programs, and **Mr. Tim Winter**, Transition Assistance Program lead.

Mr. Denton presented passed out two handouts to the Committee and reviewed two measures that DOD could implement to improve the TAP program: timeliness rates and participation rates.

In his first handout, **Mr. Denton** explains that there are a series of dates that they'd like to see DOD adhere to in order to get 200,000 veterans through the TAP program. Precept counseling takes about 12 months to complete, and could take up to 24 months if the individual's retired. **Mr. Denton** and **Mr.**

Winter would like the core curriculum to happen no later than 6 months to complete.

In his second handout, Mr. Denton reported that according to a Government Accountability Office (GAO) TAP study, less than 15% of veterans participated in the additional career tracks during the workshops: Career and Technical Training; Accessing Higher Education; and Boots to Business. They've asked DOD to work with their servicemen to try to increase their figures. The Secretary had testified that he'd like to be able to help veterans attain family sustaining wages.

Mr. Winter showed that the three additional tracks originated from VOW ACT and Veterans Employment Initiative Task Force around the 2011/2012 timeframe. He and **Mr. Denton** received feedback about the TAP curriculum and incorporated it into the Employment Workshop and the Career Technical Training Track (CTTT). The CTTT was renamed to the Career Exploration and Planning Track (CEPT) to accurately reflect changes made to the program; **Mr. Winter** will begin using the new curriculum in July.

Mr. Winter reviewed the four overall themes of the CEPT track with the Committee that will be covered through the two day workshop: Assessing Yourself, Researching the Market, Prepare Yourself, and Make a Plan.

Assessing veterans' career goals takes up the majority of the first day of the workshop. The O*NET Interest profiler is

used to give veterans feedback on their intended field of work. The CareerScope Assessment Tool is also used as a high-interest inventory and an aptitude inventory as well.

Once veterans receive a summary based on what they've done within those assessments of some recommended occupational fields, they'll begin conducting labor market research on those occupations.

On the second day, the veterans narrow down what careers they'd like to pursue. In many cases, veterans will need to obtain credentials in order to help prepare them to enter their intended field of work. The veterans will spend the rest of the second day researching the credentialing necessary for reaching their occupational goal and make a plan from there.

Next, **Mr. Winter** pointed out that roughly 7,000 veterans had participated in the TAP program workshops in FY17. With all the changes in the curriculum, the name change of the CEPT track, and better outreach of the program during pre-separation counseling, he and **Mr. Denton** hope to attract more participants.

Mr. Denton went on to highlight that the Army veterans make up the majority of participants who attend the career track workshops. One of his goals is to see more participation from other services such as the Marine Corps.

Lastly, **Mr. Denton** acknowledged that DOD and VA provided written testimony that they feel the employment workshop should continue to be three days. He and **Mr. Winter** participated in

three roundtables on the Hill and had suggested the workshops be left of five days because they feel that a three-day employment workshop is too short a time to fit in all the necessary training for veterans.

Ms. Cross opened the floor for questions and comments.

Sergeant Major Michael Stoddard, ACVETEO, recounted his experiences with the TAP program to the Committee. He praised the CEPT track curriculum for not only validating what a veteran already knows what they want to do, but builds confidence in the veteran to be able to execute their plans. He also praised the workshop for helping veterans who were clueless about the transition process to successfully figure out what they want to pursue.

Chairman Gallucci commended changing the name of the Career Technical Training Track to the Career Exploration and Planning Track. He recounts that often service members would often discount the CTTT track because they wanted to pursue a college education or start their own business, not pursue a career in the technical field.

Mr. Denton answered clarifying questions from **Mr. DeJesus** about how much time to adequately allot for the TAP program and whether or not it would be feasible to put the CEPT track at the beginning or at the end of the TAP program.

Mr. Denton answered clarifying questions from **Ms. Lois Bethards**, Executive Director, American Indian Center of

Arkansas, about whether or not service members ask for additional help from employment and training offices provided by the state.

USERRA BRIEF FROM DEPUTY DIRECTOR KENAN TORRANS, COMPLIANCE PROGRAMS

Mr. Denton introduced **Mr. Kenan Torrans**, Deputy Director, Compliance Programs. **Mr. Torrans** presented the highlights of the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA) to the Committee.

USERRA is a Federal law intended to ensure that persons who actively serve or have served in the Armed Forces, Reserve, National Guard, or other uniformed services are not discriminated against in employment based on past, present, or future military service; are promptly reemployed in their civilian jobs upon their return from duty; and are not disadvantaged in their civilian careers because of their service.

Mr. Torrans further explained rules and regulations under Title 20 Chapter IX Part 1002, such as how federal regulations differ from nonfederal regulations. More information on this, as well as USERRA as explained under Title 38 Chapter 43, can be found on www.esgr.mil/USERRA/USERRA-for-Servive-Members. He and **Mr. Denton** also stressed DOL VETS prioritizes USERRA since it is tasked with administering, interpreting and helping enforce the law and regulations.

Mr. Torrans went on to highlight the steps service members need to take if they feel their USERRA rights are being violated. Service members can submit an E1010 form on the DOL VETS website, which will initiate an investigation with one of DOL's senior investigators. Sometimes service members will first reach out to ESGR to initiate an informal complaint, and then ESGR will reach out to DOL VETS to act as a mediator since ESGR cannot conduct investigations. He stressed that DOL VETS won't engage in an investigation if a claimant is engaged with a private counsel to the extent that private counsel is interfering in the investigation.

Mr. Torrans moved on to discuss historical data trends. Data for the numbers of resolved complaints and new complaints both peaked in 2011, and has been slowly been decreasing since. There are fewer complaints since 2011 because deployments and mobilizations have been decreasing since 2011.

DOJ sent two legislative recommendations to Congress, which are now currently pending review: strengthen protections for service members under USERRA by (1) increasing DOJ's enforcement authority and (2) adding jurisdiction in state courts for service members seeking to enforce their USERRA rights through private litigation.

Mr. Torrans highlighted that the DOL VETS staff are trained to work as jacks of all trades. DOJ is conducting a pilot program to conduct investigations on its staff to test the

quality of USERRA cases, the efficiency of USERRA programs, and the efficiencies of other programs such as grants and TAP. All of this will be documented in their Report of Investigation (ROI), which will encompass comparison data from across the nation.

Lastly, **Mr. Torrans** pointed out that DOL VETS is revising the NVTI USERRA curriculum because in 2017 they were awarded a new NVTI contract. The new curriculum follows the USERRA ops manual and this new curriculum is currently being taught now.

Discussion followed on common issues that service members run into that would cause an USERRA claim. **Mr. Torrans** pointed out that reinstatement is one of the largest complaint categories. He also commented that he has seen more complaints recently regarding pensions as well as reasonable accommodations for disabled service members

Mr. Stephen Parker, ACVETEO, asked if USERRA rights extend to our military service members' families. **Mr. Torrans** clarified that while USERRA doesn't cover military spouses, military spouses that are stationed overseas have access to Army Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation (Army MWR) programs.

The Committee took a lunch recess.

SUBCOMMITTEE DISCUSSION/DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Cross opened discussion of subcommittee designations for the next year by asking those present for their opinion on

the efficacy and potential overlap of the subcommittees used in the previous year. As there were new Committee members present, she reiterated the subcommittees included Transition and Training, Barriers to Employment, and Direct Services. **Chairman Gallucci** gave a breakdown to new Committee members on what each subcommittee's focus is on.

Mr. Michael Slater, Department of Labor, asked if the Transition and Training subcommittee also covers training programs designed for state workforce staff or DOL staff. **Chairman Gallucci** commented that that's up to the subcommittee to decide.

Mr. Slater also asked some further clarifying questions on how to finalize ongoing recommendations. **Mr. Gregory Green** said that once new subcommittees are established, the Committee will assign a VETS liaison to each group who will help each subcommittee finalize their ongoing recommendations.

Discussion followed of the possibility of either adding additional subcommittees to Transition and Training, Barriers to Employment, and Direct Services or just coming up with entirely new subcommittees all together, as well as whether or not to incorporate military spouses and apprenticeships into the current categories or if they should be left alone as standalone categories. **Mr. Roberts** suggested keeping it at three subcommittees in order for the Committee to keep on track since

the draft of their report is due in October and the final draft is due to DOL in December.

Discussion followed of whether it was appropriate to place the Hire Vets program and apprenticeships under the Barriers to Employments or Direct Services subcommittee. **Mr. Denton** pointed out that LVERS are required by law to do employer outreach, which is why he suggested placing promotion of this program under Barriers to Employments.

After a short recess, **Chairman Gallucci** assigned each Committee member to the three subcommittees. He also appointed DOL staff to each of the subcommittees: **Mr. Winter** will work with Transition and Training; **Mr. Slater** will work with Barriers to Employment; and **Mr. Gregory Green** will work with Direct Services.

PUBLIC FORUM

Chairman Gallucci opened the floor for public comment.

Ms. Rosser delivered a presentation highlighting two programs started by her company in order to cater to vulnerable veteran populations find jobs: Military Skilled Trades (MST) and Student Veteran Career Conference (SVCC).

Ms. Rosser explained that MST is a combination of a job board and career fair specifically for transitioning military Guard and Reserve veterans, or military spouses, as long as they have current skilled trades experience. Service member need create a profile on militaryskilledtrades.com by entering their

name, email address, answering a series of questions, their availability, and uploading their resume if they have one.

Only employers who work directly with The Value of a Veteran can access the information in user profiles. Potential employers will be able to contact them directly if they see a match between their skill set, their availability and their geographic preference. Service members are also capable of applying for jobs through this database.

Next, **Ms. Rosser** also provided a list of tentative career fairs all throughout the United States currently projected for the remainder of 2018 and projected career fairs for 2019, which can be seen on the website.

Ms. Rosser highlighted that the SVCC is specifically targeted towards service members who are currently enrolled in school or who are recent graduates (those who've graduated within the last 12 months). Applicants should register on studentveterancareerconference.com. She advises applying for the internships as soon as possible before these opportunities disappear.

All the internships offered through SVCC are competitive paid internships and they pay very well. **Ms. Rosser** also highlighted that that these internships are an opportunity to test-drive a career and a company by thinking of a few critical elements while working, such as whether or not the servicemen like the career path or if they like the company.

There will be seven regional career fairs in September 15 and October 27, 2018 for the SVCC program and they can be found on studentveterancareerconference.com. All of these career fairs will be held on a Saturday in hopes of attracting more service members. There are seven scheduled because university recruiters recruit in the fall for their 2019 internships and their 2019 job opportunities will open up in June.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Gallucci thanked **Ms. Cross**, **Mr. Greg Green**, and **Mr. Patrick Mannix**, Department of Labor, for staying to the end of the conference to clarify any lingering issues. **Chairman Gallucci** reminded subcommittees to meet with their DOL staff representative no later than June 30th in order to be prepared to report their draft recommendations to the Committee as it relates to Barriers to Employment, Transition and Training, and Direct Services with a focus on, per the Committee's charter disabled veterans and per the Secretary's guidance on military spouses and apprenticeship programs. The next ACVETEO meeting is tentatively scheduled for July 31. The meeting was adjourned at 3:03 p.m.